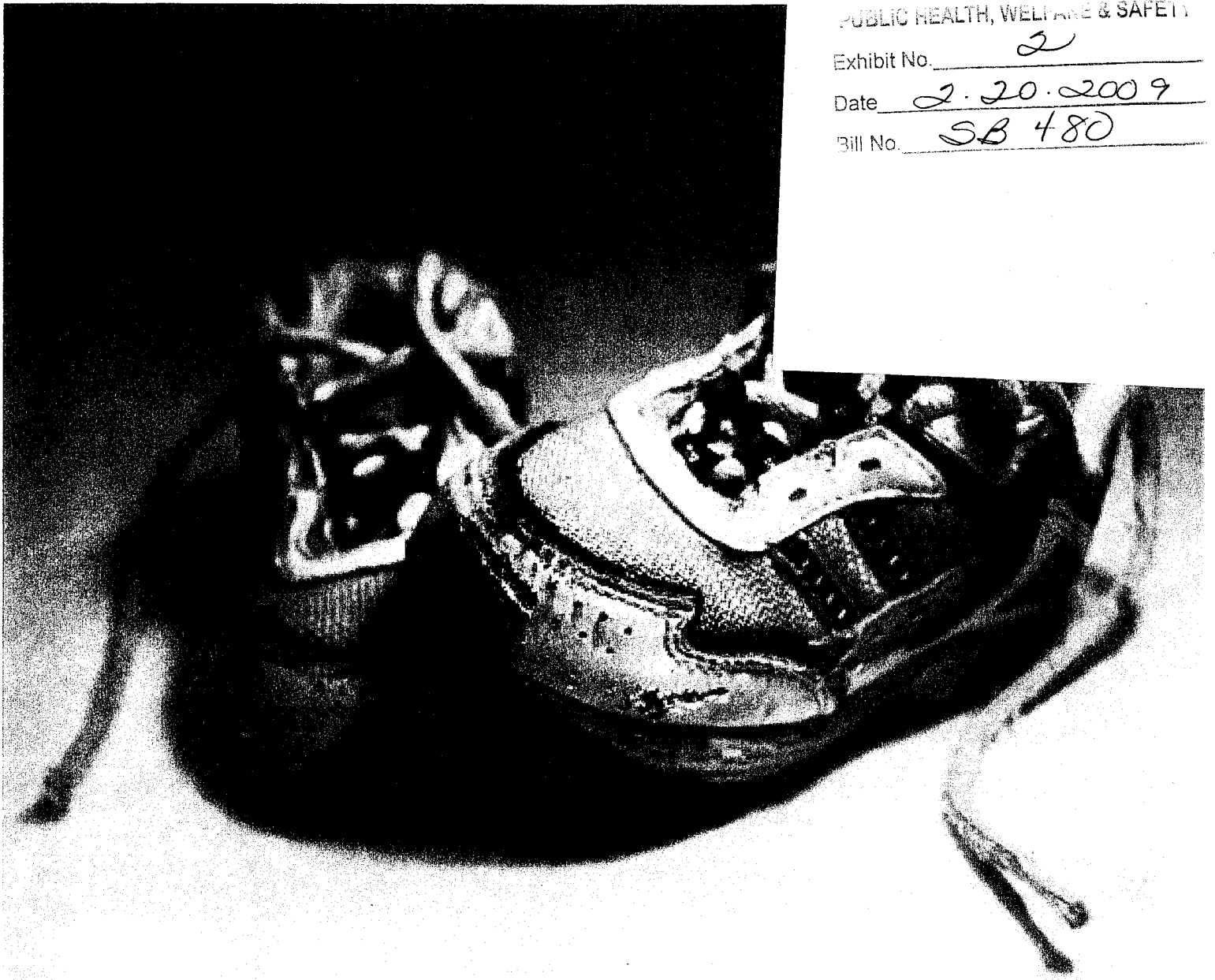


PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

Exhibit No. 2

Date 2.20.2009

Bill No. SB 480



HITTING THE M.A.R.C.

Establishing Foster Care **Minimum Adequate Rates for Children**

Technical Report



ESTABLISHING FOSTER CARE MINIMUM ADEQUATE RATES FOR CHILDREN

MONTANA

**More than 2,200 of Montana's children are in foster care.
Abused and neglected children have the right to receive
appropriate care while in government custody.**

State and local child welfare systems are obligated by federal law to provide payments to foster parents to cover the basic needs of children in foster care, including food, shelter, clothing and school supplies. Inadequate payment rates can mean that children in foster care do not receive necessary care. Low rates can negatively affect foster parent recruitment and retention, which can set off a chain reaction of long-term life consequences for children. When a child welfare system cannot maintain an adequate pool of foster homes, children may be more likely to be placed in institutional facilities, which are costly, or shuttled from placement to placement, an unstable situation which harms children and can decrease their chances of growing up in a permanent family.

A national research study has established Foster Care Minimum Adequate Rates for Children (the "Foster Care MARC") for all 50 states and the District of Columbia, the first-ever calculation of the real expenses of caring for children in foster care in the United States.

**Montana's current foster care rates must be increased by up to 44%
in order to cover the real costs of providing care for children.**

Montana's Current Monthly Foster Care Rate ¹	Foster Care MARC ² for Montana	To hit the Foster Care MARC, Montana's current rate must be increased by:
Age 2: \$515	\$598 + travel and childcare expenses	16%
Age 9: \$475	\$685 + travel and childcare expenses	44%
Age 16: \$572	\$751 + travel and childcare expenses	31%

Montana Stats³

Number of children in foster care:	2,222
Number of licensed family foster homes:	946
Average number of different foster care placements children experience:	2.8
Percent of children placed in facilities (rather than family foster homes):	14%
Average length of time spent in foster care:	27.6 months (2.3 years)

For more information about the Foster Care MARC, please visit these websites:


www.childrensrights.org


www.nfpainc.org

 UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
www.family.umaryland.edu

¹ Current as of 05/07, Source: National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning, Foster care maintenance payments, www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/foster-care.html (2007), supplemented with additional research by Children's Rights.

² The Foster Care MARC includes travel expenses associated with the daily provision of basic care to children. However, due to the variability in expenses, the Foster Care MARC does not include the cost of travel for visitation with the child's biological family, travel to administrative and judicial reviews or the cost of full-time child care for working foster parents. Foster parents should be reimbursed for their actual expenses for these purposes, in addition to the Foster Care MARC.

³ All data from CWLA, NDAS, <http://ndas.cwla.org> (2004), except number of children in foster care which is from AFCARS (2005).

1-19-09

To whom it may concern,

My husband and I are foster parents. One of the reasons we became foster parents, is to help the kids out there, that need a family. Our youngest grandchildren were in the system. Their foster parents were awesome. To this day they are still part of their lives. They call, visit, spend time with them, when they can. They don't forget their birthdays or Christmas. Every child so far that we have received into our home, came with the clothes on their back, and nothing else. The first thing we did is to go shopping. We got them everything that they needed at the time, if or when they went home we packed up all they acquired with us and sent them home with it all or to their next foster home. We are on a set income, plus at the beginning we were raising five grandchildren. The three oldest ones we adopted privately, the two youngest we adopted thru the system. The kids come first. We have never received a clothing allowance for any of the kids. These kids are important they are our future. Their parents have failed them. We can't. The state and the foster parents are there to help

change their lives² for the better.
So give us the help we need. We need
more money for our bids.

Thank You

Hope Martin
215- Hope Drive
Townsend Mt 59644

James L Martin

MARC

Catherine Berg [mediouchicat@imt.net]

Sent: Sunday, February 08, 2009 12:28 PM

To: Costigan, Twila

Twila,

I hope this is adequate. I could write a book on this subject, but tried to keep it simple. Let me know if you need more.

Catherine

My name is Catherine Berg, and I am a state foster care parent on the Crow Reservation. Five years ago my husband and I decided to try being foster parents because we had the space and saw the need. We take in up to six children at any given time with many staying between 8 months to 1 1/2 years.

In the last two years our resources at the local clinic have been downsized significantly. We no longer have access to a regular pediatrician or eye doctor. We also have never had local access to any child psychologist which has been required by all our children above the age of 2 yrs. This has forced us to travel 45 miles to the nearest city for these resources. Since the addition of foster children in our home, our trips to town have increased from once or twice a month to three or four times a week depending on the services they require. Combined with rising fuel prices and wear on our vehicles, these costs have far out-weighed any compensations we receive for travel.

Additionally, our monthly stipends have not increased to compensate for the rising costs of food, electricity, propane, diapers, wipies, lotion, bath products, laundry supplies, toys, etc. Although our children are given clothing allowances, we inevitably have to spend our own money on clothes, shoes, and undergarments.

Presently, I am one of two homes in our county that can take multiple placements of younger children and/or large sibling groups. All the children I have cared for suffer from a number of disorders that make it essential that I stay home with them. These range from attachment and eating disorders, physical problems, fetal alcohol syndrome, in vitro drug exposure, post traumatic stress disorder, sexual abuse, oppositional disorders, and obsessive/compulsive behaviors. They also have missed important developmental stages due to the nature of their experiences and we have to "start over". I have had to teach older children how to eat, brush their teeth, and dress themselves.

I love what I do, but have to wrestle with the decision to continue each month when I review our budget.

Sincerely,
Catherine Berg
PO Box 248
Pryor, MT 59066
(406) 248-8732

Would You? updated with some changes

Lila Horner [lila_babymontana@yahoo.com]

Sent: Sunday, February 08, 2009 11:18 AM**To:** Costigan, Twila

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Would You?

My name is Lila Horner, along with my husband, Todd we have been taking care of Montana's precious foster children for 5 years all from the age of 7 months to 17.

In those 5 years we have had between 30 to 40 children in and out of our home either through respite, kinship, foster, specialized or therapeutic care. We have always adjusted our home each and every time someone in need enters our caring home. We have taken them to Doctor visits, Dentist visits, Therapy visits, parent visits and every other visit that this or that department needs them or us for. And because we live less than 10 miles of these places, we do this out of pocket. We are required to attend at least 15 hours of training per year to maintain our license, usually again, out of pocket.

Our belongings, our home, floors to ceilings and our selves are often cursed at, hit on, spit on, urinated on, and yes, let's not leave out feces on. Anything of value, sentimental or not, need to be put in hiding so it doesn't get broke or stolen. We work 24 hours a day every day 365 days a year. Homes that provide this kind of special care to children in need are called group homes. Who care for these children for around \$75.00 a day, AND the workers are paid at least the legal minimum wage (actually more like \$9.00 and on up per hour), not to mention the overtime. They have the use of company vehicles for transportation. These same workers receive at least 40 hours of vacation and usually round the same for sick time. After 5 years of service, between 2-3 weeks' vacation, some kind of health, dental and the possibility of retirement benefit.

In home care means we provide the children with a lifestyle that is kid oriented from the meals we provide, to the clothing they wear, I mean wear, to games/toys they destroy. All out of a less than small budget that we are currently receiving AND we didn't even add in the expenses of swim, dance and/or other childhood activities that interest them and encourage them fine living talents that prepares them for responsible adulthood.

We don't ask for much, in fact we ask far less from you than you do of us foster/adoptive parents. I am not going to beg you for a rate increase that would be insulting. We are already receiving pennies for Montana's precious commodities, children. I am however giving you, ladies and gentlemen, an example of what I and many of Montana's foster/adoptive parents go through and that is all for that less than small budget of \$16.22 an day - 67 ½ cents an hour and then I ask you - would you?

Lila Horner

781 Rainier Road Helena, Mt 59602

202-3880

Dear legislators

I am writing this letter to ask you to consider an increase in funding for foster families to allow them to continue in their service to foster children.

I, Russ Genaw and my wife Mary Ellen have been doing fostering for 15 yrs. We have seen many foster parents come and go. One of the problems is that it becomes difficult to do the care they wish to do, without adequate help in the funding allowed.

I realize it is difficult times, but we cannot short-change our foster children in the case of those with a heart to help. The other thing is that there is no institution that could take care of children if the rates were paid.

Yours truly
Russell E Genaw &
Mary Ellen Genaw